

Newsletter

I would like to welcome all members new and returning to this our first quarterly newsletter of the new council. This edition contains an introduction by each of the Scrutiny Board Chairs, updating Members on the role and some of the issues facing their particular Boards. I would like to encourage all members to contribute any articles or issues they would like to include in future editions. To do this please contact the scrutiny team.

As Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board I would like to thank Tracey Ingham our Senior Scrutiny Manager and her team of Vic Milbourne and Linda Graham for putting this newsletter together.

In the last Council I was Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee and I am pleased to be working with the Team again. This Scrutiny Team may be small but what they lack in numbers they more than compensate for in high quality and dedicated advice and committed work to the scrutiny process.

I was pleased to see so many of our members at the training day on the 29 May. This was a very useful day and I know members appreciated the experience from the feedback forms completed and suggestions made for future events which we will take up.

As I mentioned on the day, scrutiny is one of the main avenues for the 74 backbench members to get involved to help influence and change the way our Council works for the benefit of all our communities.

The Chairs and Officers of Scrutiny can only do this if we have your co-operation and support not just in Board and Committee meetings but also especially in the Task and Finish Groups set to look into specific topics.

These groups are essential in bringing forward recommendations and ideas from non-executive members to help formulate better outcomes and services for the people of Cumbria.

Councillor Bill Wearing
Scrutiny Management Board Chairman



Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board

On the 18 June 2013 the new Scrutiny Advisory Board – Communities and Place came into being with our first meeting. This board is an amalgamation of the previous boards for safer stronger, environment and economy. So the boards remit is wide ranging covering service areas:

- Highways;
- Transportation;
- Planning services;
- Sustainability and waste prevention;
- Nuclear;
- Waste services;
- Economic development;
- Historic and natural environment;
- Safer communities;
- Health and safety;
- Trading standards;
- Emergency /resilience planning;
- Fire and rescue service.

The board has 12 members which are a good mix of old and new members all of whom brought different perspectives to the meeting. As chair I felt that the first meeting went well with excellent discussions and debates taking place enabling the board to come together with good ideas for task and finish groups, flooding and highways were two that members felt would be beneficial to look at for example.

As chair I look forward to working closely with members, corporate directors and scrutiny officers in delivering an effective scrutiny panel for the benefit of the people of Cumbria

Councillor Mike Hawkins
Chairman Communities and Place



Contact us

E: scrutiny@cumbria.gov.uk

Children's Services Scrutiny Advisory Board



I have been a County councillor for some 16 years, many of those have included Children's Services in Scrutiny and Cabinet. I have been on the Audit and Pensions Committees, I have also been an Allerdale Borough Council Councillor for 10 years working on the audit and standards committees, and a Parish Councillor for over 40 years.

Children's Services encompasses education and children's social services. It would be very easy to find many issues for task groups to work on. However, we need to be much more focussed on the main issues and priorities of this important Cumbrian service. Whether this is to do with Safeguarding, Children's Centres or Schools and their future funding, for example, there will be a need in the future for Scrutiny to complete detailed work that enable Cabinet to make the best decisions.

The Children's Service has undergone much re-engineering over the past 3 years and there will be more to come. The Scrutiny Board needs to be in the forefront of future change, by being a critical friend. The staff need to be confident and comfortable with the Board and its members, to enable us to fulfil our role. Without good Scrutiny, the Council will not achieve the goals that have been and will be set. In the competitive world that our 107,000 Children and Young People are about to enter, they need to be fully equipped to compete, both nationally and internationally.

There will be financial constraints placed on Local Government looking forward, which will concentrate minds on making any funding that we get, work 'smarter', to achieve the service required in this very large county. The fact that our half million population covers an area similar in size to the square miles taken up within the M25 circle, together with a similar ring further out beyond the M25. This area encompasses a very large population and puts our problem into context. Our priority will be to explore ways to make Children's Services respond to these changing times as effective possible.

Councillor Duncan Fairbairn Chairman Children's Services Scrutiny Advisory Board



Adult and Local Services Scrutiny Advisory Board

In terms of my professional background I have worked in both teaching and as a carer in Adult Social Care. I worked for a charity and then with Cumbria Care and feel that this will help to inform my role as a chair on Adults Scrutiny.

I have been a District Councillor at South Lakeland for a number of years and was involved in joint scrutiny work between the districts and county in 2009. This is my first term as a councillor for Cumbria County Council.

The Adults Scrutiny Board has been one of the busiest of the scrutiny boards over the last 18 months and has undertaken a wealth of key reviews on adult social care subjects from the reconfiguration of care homes in Cumbria to the critical issue of safeguarding adults. The Board also undertook reviews on the cultural services side of the directorate's remit, with task and finish groups on both Library Services and the Archives Service.

The new Adults Scrutiny Board already has a number of potential topics for review over the coming year, with the proposal that the first review will be a joint one with the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board on the transition of young people from the care of Children's Services into the care of Adults Services.

Scrutiny plays an extremely important part in ensuring Cumbrian residents get value for the taxes they pay for local services. That is why I am pleased to be part of the Scrutiny process, looking at future plans, to see that they are well formed, in line with what the people want and formed through clear and open channels of governance.

As well as the difficulties of the present Local and Government funding arrangements there are a number of particular issues around services in Cumbria and how they are provided. This will be a key consideration for the Adults Scrutiny Board going forward and is likely to be a critical element in both its formal meetings as well as its scrutiny review activity. I look forward to leading this important scrutiny board.

Councillor Mark Wilson Chairman Adult and Local Services Scrutiny Advisory Board

Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee



The committee is somewhat different to the other Scrutiny Boards as it is predominantly externally focussed and has a membership drawn from both the County and District Councils. The first meeting of the new Committee was held on the 4th July, and it was clear from the outset that Health Scrutiny will be kept busy over the next four years with a number of highly significant issues which need to be kept under scrutiny.

These include:

- The Cost reduction programme announced by the University of Morecambe Bay Hospital Trusts (UMBHT) initiated action and meetings with Lead members and the UMBHT Chief Executive in June.
- There was also national media cover age of CQC's failings with the UMBHT
- This week saw the publication of the Keogh report on mortality rates which saw North Cumbria Hospital Trust placed in special measures
- There is the development of a clinical strategy for South Cumbria / North Lancashire, which we are jointly working with Lancashire's Health Scrutiny to monitor and review.
- The acquisition of North Cumbria Hospital Trust by Northumbria

In addition to these major pieces of work, the Committee also ensures that it scrutinises and reviews other issues as they arise, whether that be the monitoring of breast screening services in North Cumbria, or considering the maternity services in Furness General Hospital.

The new committee has had to hit the ground running. Locally and nationally the Health service faces challenge and great change. We need to scrutinise proposed change to ensure it is equitable reasonable and reflects local needs whilst providing better service and outcomes. There is going to be a lot of talk and publicity about restructuring within the County. I prefer the word reconfiguration because structures is about organisation while reconfiguration seems to indicate to me patient access to services and the PATHWAYS they follow. People deserve quality pathways.

Lord Desai's definition of quality has three interlocking domains: - Safety – Effectiveness – Patient Experience

The committee itself is also the subject of public interest and scrutiny, as can clearly be seen when Robert Francis QC in his report on the Mid Staffs Hospital Trust, criticised failings by the Staffordshire Health Scrutiny Committee. I was reminded of this in a recent Radio Cumbria interview when I was asked what actions the Committee had taken as the problems in the two Acute Hospitals emerged. The Committee does not represent an inspection service or performance management function. It does hold health service bodies to account and this we had done. The interviewer had some difficulty in understanding this.

It is very clear to me that the Committee which has been very active energetic and a model of good practice will need to raise its game even further and to be able to work 'smarter'. This will involve having a structured approach within committee so that we effectively and constructively scrutinise issues in a timely manner. It will also mean further developing our relationship with the reformed CQC and the new Healthwatch body who can provide the intelligence which will allow us challenge bland assertions or assurances.

On July 15th Health Scrutiny held a Stakeholder event to help us organise our future work programme. NHS bodies as well as third sector organisation were represented. CQC and Healthwatch were also both there. Unsurprisingly one major issue identified was the need for work to be completed on the integration of health and social care. Lead Members will look at the suggestions from the group discussions and full Committee will decide on the shape of the programme in September.

We planning to hold a Scrutiny Development session in October focussing on health, and I would strongly urge all Members to attend if possible.

Councillor Rod Wilson Chairman Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee

Health Scrutiny Stakeholder Event

On Monday 15 July, the Health Scrutiny Committee held a successful Stakeholder event with nearly thirty representatives from the health service, voluntary sector, Care Quality Commission and County Council attending. Over the course of the afternoon 36 suggestions were put forward for issues that Health Scrutiny may wish to look at in more detail, either through task and finish groups, in the Committee itself. Other topics were suggested as possibly being more appropriate in terms of timing for the Committee to keep an overview and monitoring of developments, with a view to a more in depth review or scrutiny taking place as appropriate at a later stage. These suggestions will be taken to the next full meeting of the Health Scrutiny committee on 24 September 2013 for consideration.

Cumbria Police and Crime Panel

The Cumbria Police and Crime Panel (PCP) has now been in place for over six months, and has held a series of meetings looking at issues ranging from the Police and Crime Commissioner's budget and the Police and Crime Plan for Cumbria through to dealing with the issues of drugs and alcohol within the county.

The Panel is a joint committee of all of the local authorities in Cumbria, with a requirement to be in so far as possible geographically and politically balanced. The Panel is fully supported by the County Council's scrutiny team, and meets publically on a quarterly basis.

The full membership of the Panel is:

Councillor Celia Tibble (Allerdale BC) – Chair
 Councillor Barry Doughty (Barrow BC) – Vice-Chair
 Councillor Geoff Garrity (Copeland BC)
 Councillor Stephen Bowditch (Carlisle CC)
 Councillor Sid Simpson (Eden DC)
 Councillor Graham Vincent (South Lakeland DC)

Councillor David Wilson (Allerdale BC)
 Councillor Helen Fearon (Cumbria CC)
 Councillor Brenda Gray (Cumbria CC)
 Councillor John Mallinson (Cumbria CC)
 Judith Cooke – Independent Member
 Linda Vance – Independent Member

Further information about the Panel, its meeting papers, and other useful information can be found on the PCP's website at cumbriapcp.org.uk or please contact the scrutiny team for more details.



Scrutiny Task Groups

Following the first round of Board meetings members have agreed to set up two Task and Finish Groups. The first is a joint review between the Children's and Adults Scrutiny Boards focussing on the transition of young people from Children's Services to Adult and Local Services. Membership of this task group has now been confirmed as Councillors Mike Hawkins, Liz Mallinson, Val Tarbitt, John Murphy and Andrew Lysser. The first meeting of this group will be held on 16 August. If you would like any more information on this task group contact **Vic Milbourne on 01228 22564**.

The second one is in relation to flooding and particularly the County Council's role as local lead flood authority. The members of this task group are Councillors Tony Markley, John McReesh, Alan Kennon, Trevor Allison, Keith Hitchin, Ernie Wilson, Hilary Carrick and Kevin Hamilton. The first meeting of this group will be held on 12 August. If you would like any further information on this task group please contact **Linda Graham on 01228 226362**.

Scrutiny Work Programme Consultation

As part of increasing the effectiveness and transparency of Scrutiny, we are consulting with various stakeholders to seek suggestions for potential topics / issues to inform the Scrutiny work programme for 2013 / 14.

All councillors have been emailed seeking their views for possible items for consideration, and other stakeholders are also being canvassed for their opinion. This includes District and Borough Councils, Parish Councils, the health service, local MPs and the third sector.

If you would like to suggest a topic for review please let the scrutiny team know by 15 August so that they can be compiled and presented to Members at the work programme development session on 2 September, to which all non-executive Members have been invited to attend. **If you have not yet confirmed your availability for 2 September please contact the Scrutiny team.**

Scrutiny Development Sessions – Dates for the diary

Throughout the course of the year Scrutiny put on a number of development sessions focussing on different areas of policy or particular skills which Members may wish to know more about. Forthcoming events to which all non executive members are invited are:

- **Monday 2 September** – prioritisation of topics for the scrutiny work programme and specific skills sessions
- **Tuesday 15 October** – Finance Development Session, looking at local government finances, the impact of changes on the Council
- **Monday 28 October** – Health development session, looking at the health service in the county, the recent Keogh review and other key issues for health scrutiny.

More detailed programmes for each session will be circulated closer to the time. But if you would like any further information or would like to confirm you are planning to attend any or all of these events please contact the scrutiny team to let them know.

Meet the team

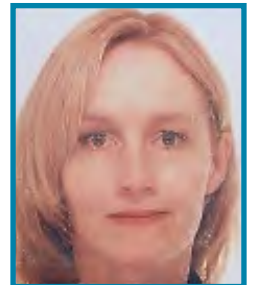
Tracey Ingham

Tracey is the Scrutiny Manager and has worked in Local Government for a number of years, both at a District and county level. Whilst supporting all aspects of Scrutiny at the Council Tracey is primarily responsible for supporting Scrutiny management Board, the Police and Crime Panel and the Health Scrutiny Committee and their work programmes. Tracey Ingham on **01228 226259** or **tracey.ingham@cumbria.gov.uk**



Vic Milbourne

Vic is the longest standing Member of the Scrutiny team, having worked in Scrutiny at the Council since 2006. Over that time she has supported a number of Scrutiny Boards including a two year secondment running the Countywide Joint Scrutiny Committee. Vic Currently supports the Children & Young People and Adults Scrutiny Advisory Boards Vic Milbourne on **01228 226564** or **vic.milbourne@cumbria.gov.uk**



Linda Graham

Linda is the newest member of the scrutiny team but has worked for the Council for a number of years, many of which were as a Senior Democratic Services Officer working closely with both Executive and Non-Executive Members. Linda is primarily responsible for supporting the Communities & Place Scrutiny Advisory Board and the Police and Crime Panel. Linda Graham on **01228 226352** or **linda.graham@cumbria.gov.uk**



Please email us at: **scrutiny@cumbria.gov.uk**